

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

June 23, 2015

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on June 23, 2015, pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Bernie Buonanno, Paul MacDonald and Patrick Butler.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Kim Keough and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; John McGinn, Amanda Wilmouth, Melissa Avedisian, Rachel Martelly, Diane Richards and Breana Quinn, RICC; Martha Sheridan, Kristen Adamo and Tom Reil, PWCVB; Daniel Schwartz and Michael Gravison, VETS; Cheryl Cohen, John Ciolfi and Larry Lepore, RICC/DDC; Evan Smith, Tim Walsh and Brittany Lauro, Discover Newport; Mark Brodner, Commerce, RI and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Mr. Buonanno called the meeting to order at 12:43 PM

PWCVB

Mr. Reil began the PWCVB report by announcing that the CVB had hit

their year end goal. The Committee congratulated the CVB on their achievement. Mr. Reil reported on Providence Hotel performance for the Month of May. Mr. Reil stated that the average daily rate, occupancy and RevPar have each increased dramatically. Mr. Reil noted that occupancy is at 70.5%, and the average daily rate was \$150.23. Mr. Reil reported on sales production for the month of May and noted that there were nineteen definite bookings for May 2015 compared to sixteen in the month of May 2014. Mr. Reil said that tentative bookings and tentative room nights have increased. Production for Convention Center definite bookings and definite room nights is up over May 2014. Mr. Reil noted that the economic impact calculation for the Convention Center bookings exceeded six million dollars. Mr. Reil reported that USA Gymnastics for 2016 will be held at the Convention Center in June and will have a significant impact on the City. He reported that Athletic Championships 2017, Environmental Systems Research Institute and EDUCAUSE/Nercomp 2016 highlight bookings for the Complex. Mr. Reil said that tentative bookings include the National Governor's Association, American Wind Energy Association, Research Chefs Association, Nteractive Consulting/Nteractive Sales and Follett Software/The Aspen Institute. Mr. Reil reported that sales activity for the month of May included a trip to Las Vegas where the sales team attended and exhibited at the Annual partner Meeting. Mr. Reil stated that the team hosted a customer advisory board think tank with thirteen current and potential customers from across the region, exhibited at Bryant University World Trade Day and the RI Sports Commission hosted the

first Rhode Island Sports Summit attended by area attractions, hotels, parks and recreation directors and venue managers.

Ms. Adamo addressed the Committee and reported on marketing efforts during the month of May. She stated that Recommend RI was presented at several key stakeholder events at the RI Foundation. Ms. Adamo noted that the CVB is currently working on several high profile meeting and convention bids. Ms. Adamo said that the first full committee meeting for March Madness 2016 was held and a hospitality subcommittee meeting was scheduled for July. A Facebook advertising campaign was developed and has yielded triple-digit growth. Ms. Adamo said that she has been working with the sales team on presentations for convention services offerings, creating a new videos for the Omni Providence and the Convention Center, hosted 25 reporters in a ten day period and held an Irish Step event at Murphy's to prepare the business community.

DUNKIN' DOUNTS CENTER

Ms. Cohen updated the Committee on the Dunkin' Donuts Center events. Ms. Cohen included in her presentation a map indicating the competitive facilities within 125 miles of the Dunkin' Donuts Center. She also provided a chart with the number of budgeted events compared to the number of actual events. Ms. Cohen said that 125 events were budgeted but only 124 took place. She also stated that budgeted attendance was 678,481 and only 634,521 in attendance.

Ms. Cohen reported on social media and said that 84% of the people who attend an event at the Dunk hear about it online. Ms. Cohen reported that social is the most influential in introducing live events to people and video and online reviews have the most impact on the purchase decision. Ms. Cohen presented statistics on websites, e-blasts, Facebook and Instagram and twitter from fiscal year 2014 compared to fiscal year 2015. Ms. Cohen presented the Dunkin' Donuts Center Booking Report.

CONVENTION CENTER

Mr. McGinn was asked to present the report for the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn stated that the revenue goal for the year is \$8,800,000.00 and that currently we are at \$7,953,246.94 an increase of \$78,498.79. Mr. McGinn said that these numbers represent actual events for July through May and projected events for June. Mr. McGinn noted that tentative bookings for events include the Google Advertising with the Providence Journal, National Governor's Association Meeting, Revolution Talent Competition, Random Smile Gala and Starry Starry Night (City Year). Mr. McGinn was pleased to report that contracted events were the CVS Charity Classic Gala, Action Expo, New England League of Middle Schools, Rhode Island Bar Association Annual Meeting and Pan IIT Conference. Several site tours were held as well as industry/client events. A meeting was held with the Rhode Island Department of Education, Pfizer and a Providence Marriott Customer Appreciation Night. Mr. McGinn

included in his presentation the Rhode Island Convention Center Attendance Statistics that indicate a drop in attendance for the month of May, 2014 compared to May, 2015 as well as lower attendance for the year. Social media statistics were also presented.

Mr. McGinn stated that he has been working with Ms. Cohen and Ms. Keough to come up with a robust action plan to increase revenue. Mr. McCarvill asked how the team plans to reach their goal. Mr. McGinn said that they would begin by looking at all individual events to see what they are paying in other venues. Mr. Lepore said that the Convention Center will make a conscious effort to increase rent where possible. He also stated that we need to grow revenue streams inside the building.

Mr. Lepore reported that the cheerleaders are outgrowing the space at the Convention Center. He said that there have been discussions regarding the possibility of moving Providence College or the Providence Bruins for a weekend in January. Mr. Lepore stated that the Cheerleaders would like to expand even though they are already booked and would appreciate the opportunity to use both buildings. Mr. McCarvill stated that it would be very difficult to convince either the Bruins or PC to change their schedule at this time.

VETS

Mr. Gravison reported on insights, analytics and attendance at the

VETS. Mr. Gravison noted that attendance was down for the month to budget but year to date attendance is up significantly to budget. Mr. Gravison reported on social media and noted that there was a 78.9% increase in new visitors to the website. Mr. Gravison presented highlights of the remainder of the fiscal year and events booked for the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Gravison stated that American Idol would be at the theater in August with the top five performers from season 14. Eddie Izzard is scheduled for August 29th and the season will continue with Tommy Emmanuel, Felix Cavaliere's Rascals, Memories of Elvis, A Bronx Tale with Chazz Palminteri, Zoltan Maga, CS Lewis' the Screwtape Letters, Last Comic Standing, WBFF New England Fitness and Fashion, Mavis Staples and Joan Osborne and Disney Live. Later in the year The Princess Bride will be shown and Cary Elwes will be present to answer questions on the film, Straight No Chaser returns and The New York Tenors will bring their Christmas music to the theater. Childrens programing will include Peppa Pig Live and Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood. Mr. Gravison reported that FirstWorks and the Festival Ballet Providence and the Rhode Island Philharmonic continue to attract quality programming to the facility.

Mr. Gravison reported that we have received permission from the Capital Center Commission to put signage on the back of the building. Mr. Gravison also reminded the Committee that the first quarter was lost to renovations.

RICCA

Ms. Keough distributed a report highlighting the month's activities. Ms. Keough reported on our response to the House Republican Policy Group Report and said that she thinks that we achieved a balance between being diplomatic and confrontational. Ms. Keough reported that she is creating the Annual Report and the marketing team is working on the Fiscal year 2016 Marketing Plans for the presentation in August. Ms. Keough presented a chart indicating the increase in website, Facebook and twitter visitor activity for the months of May and June 2014 compared to 2015.

Mr. Smith from Discover Newport addressed the Committee and reported that Newport is doing very well. He noted that tourism is a huge business in Rhode Island and he doesn't understand why the media doesn't get it that their negative slant will hurt the business. Mr. Smith noted that the German Airline that is now flying into TF Greene will usher in a new era in Rhode Island tourism. Mr. Smith reported that the Newport Hyatt and the Marriott have undergone renovations as well as the Tennis Hall of Fame. Mr. Smith stated that the possibility of Newport Grand moving to Tiverton will bring big changes to that area of the City. Mr. Smith noted that most concerts will be going away and a couple will be moving to India Point Park.

Mark Brodner from Commerce RI addressed the Committee. Mr. Brodner stated that the State Budget increased the budget for State

tourism. He said that the Governor embraced the Recommend RI theme initiative. Mr. Brodner said that there is an Irish airline that is interested in TF Greene Airport. Mr. MacDonald asked what happened to the redistribution of funds within the tourism industry. Mr. Sheridan stated that the legislation did not pass. Mr. MacDonald noted that Ms. Sheridan had taken a beating at the meeting and it was not a fun night for her.

Mr. Buonanno thanked everyone for all of their hard work and asked if there was any further business. Hearing none she looked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Butler and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:45 PM